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SUBJECT: "Longer life for towels" ... Information from the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture. -oOo-

Maybe it's hard to believe...but towels are turning up in the stores again in back-to-normal numbers. If you can't always find towels when you shop...it's because so many people want to buy them that there still aren't enough to go around. But, even so, a lot of towels are being made.

So if somebody in your family is a lucky shopper...maybe you'll find towels under the Christmas tree. And if you do, remember that a good towel deserves good care. And start your Christmas towels off right, say home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

One way to make a towel last longer, the home economists say, is to rotate your supplies. When towels come back from the laundry...put them on the bottom of the pile. Then the ones that have just been washed will be the last ones used again. That way, a few towels won't get all the trips to the laundry, while the others lie on the shelf. If you store towels for a long time without washing them, the fabric may deteriorate. Smoke, dust, and moisture in the air combine to weaken the cotton...even while the towel is resting on the shelf.

When you wash your towels...if you use a bleach, be sure to dilute it. You'll find directions on the package. If you use too strong a bleach, it will weaken the fabric. One good way to bleach towels is to dry them in the sunshine. But be sure you bring them in as soon as they are dry. Don't let them whip about in the wind too long. The wind may loosen the yarn at the corners of the hem, and cause them to fray. If the selvage wears out, take several rows of stitches along the edge. This will check the fraying. And it will strengthen the edge and make the towel wear longer.

-More-

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And now about ironing. Never iron Turkish towels. Ironing mats the loops, and the towels won't soak up as much water. Ironing Turkish towels may even bend the fibers in the yarn enough to break them. You can iron face and dish towels. But iron them flat, and do the folding by hand. And here's a good trick: Change the way you fold the towels sometimes. This will prevent too much wear at any one spot, and keep the towel from splitting along the creases.

To avoid mildew, hang towels up right after using...so air can circulate through them. Never leave a damp towel in a heap on the bathroom floor...even for a little while. Sometimes you can't see mildew. But even when you can't see it it will damage the fabric.

And one word of warning: When you dry sharp knives on dish towels...or razor blades on hand towels...be especially careful not to cut through even one yarn of the flat weave. A cut through even one yarn will weaken the fabric of the towel.

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